

**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
NORTHERN DIVISION**

Larry D. Thomas
Plaintiff/pro se

Civil Action No 2:05cv437-T

Vs

R James Nicholson
Secretary, Department of
Veterans Affairs

EXHIBIT I

Educational Opportunities Management had at their disposal

Training and Developing Project Managers

Credentials and Academic Degrees

Agencies may establish career development programs in which employees can move through a series of increasingly more responsible project management assignments. Sometimes these career programs include opportunities for rotational assignments that help broaden the employee's perspective. In addition, formal training (both Government-sponsored and commercial courses) may cover aspects of project management. Individual courses may be organized into formal programs that lead to academic degrees or that help employees become eligible for a specific credential. In any instance, agencies need to ensure that courses and training adhere to established procedures and guidelines, especially as the law now authorizes agencies to fund credentials and academic degree training. **Agencies are reminded that they may pay for formal programs that lead to academic degrees only if the academic institution is accredited by an organization approved by the U.S. Department of Education.**

Credentials

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 enacted into law changes in chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code. Now, 5 U.S.C. 5757 provides that an agency may pay for "(1) expenses for employees to obtain professional credentials, including expenses for professional accreditation, State-imposed and professional licenses, and professional certification; and (2) examinations to obtain such credentials."

This law goes on to require that this authority "may not be exercised on behalf of any employee occupying or seeking to qualify for appointment to any position that is excepted from the competitive service because of the confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character of the position."

Academic Degree Training

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 expanded agency authority to pay for academic degree training. Now, 5 U.S.C. 4107 provides that "An agency may select and assign an employee to academic degree training and may pay or reimburse the costs of academic degree training from appropriated or other available funds if such training:

- Contributes significantly to (A) meeting an identified agency training need; (B) resolving an identified agency staffing problem; or (C) accomplishing goals in the strategic plan of the agency;
- Is part of a planned, systemic, and coordinated agency employee development program linked to accomplishing the strategic goals of the agency; and
- Is accredited and is provided by a college or university that is accredited by a nationally recognized body."

The new 5 U.S.C. 4107 goes on to require that the agency:

- Consistent with the merit system principles set forth in paragraphs (2) and (7) of section 2301(b), take into consideration the need to (A) maintain a balanced workforce in which women, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, and persons with disabilities are appropriately represented in Government service; and (B) provide employees effective education and training to improve organizational and individual performance;
- Assure that the training is not for the sole purpose of providing an employee an opportunity to obtain an academic degree or qualify for appointment to a particular position for which the academic degree is a basic requirement;
- Assure that no authority under this subsection is exercised on behalf of any employee occupying or seeking to qualify for (A) a non-career appointment in the Senior Executive Service; or (B) appointment to any position that is excepted from the competitive service because of its confidential policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character; and
- To the greatest extent practicable, facilitate the use of online degree training.

Project Manager Characteristics

Project Manager Duties/Tasks

Project manager positions exist in many different disciplines. For example, an engineer or architect normally manages projects associated with designing specialized equipment or structures. Subject matter experts in fields such as IT or finance deal with developing and testing information networks and financial systems. However, regardless of the subject matter area involved, the project manager function is characterized by a *common set* of duties/tasks. A project manager generally applies all of these duties/tasks to meet project requirements, as follows:

- Determines appropriate products or services with clients or customers to define project scope, requirements, and deliverables;
- Develops, modifies, or provides input to project plans;
- Implements project plans to meet objectives;
- Coordinates and integrates project activities;
- Manages, leads, or administers project resources;
- Monitors project activities and resources to mitigate risk;
- Implements or maintains quality assurance processes;
- Makes improvements, solves problems, or takes corrective action when problems arise;
- Gives presentations or briefings on all aspects of the project;
- Participates in phase, milestone, and final project reviews;

- Identifies project documentation requirements or procedures; and
- Develops and implements product release plan.

IT Project Manager Duties/Tasks

In addition to the duties/tasks cited above that are common to most project manager positions, IT project managers perform or are responsible for managing most of the following:

- Identifies customers' information systems requirements;
- Analyzes information systems requirements or environment;
- Designs or conducts analytical studies, cost-benefit analyses, or other research;
- Evaluates, monitors, or ensures compliance with laws, regulations, policies, standards, or procedures;
- Purchases or contracts for IT services, equipment, products, supplies, property, or other items;
- Integrates information systems subsystems;
- Develops information systems testing strategies, plans, or scenarios;
- Identifies standards or requirements for infrastructure configuration or change management;
- Participates in change control (for example, reviewing configuration change requests);
- Develops or implements information systems security plans and procedures; and
- Ensures appropriate product-related training and documentation are developed and made available to customers.

Project Manager Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities/Competencies

All project managers apply common knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies, organized into three areas:

- General knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies;
- Project management knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies; and
- Technical knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies.

The specific knowledges, skills, and abilities/competencies for each functional area are as follows:

General Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities/Competencies

- **Customer Service** - Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.
- **Decision Making** - Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change.
- **Flexibility** - Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; effectively deals with ambiguity.
- **Interpersonal Skills** - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.
- **Leadership** - Influences, motivates, and challenges others; adapts leadership styles to a variety of situations.
- **Legal, Government and Jurisprudence** - Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, legal practices and documents, Government regulations, Executive orders, agency rules, Government organization and functions, and the democratic political process.
- **Oral Communication** - Expresses information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.
- **Organizational Awareness** - Knows the organization's mission and functions, and how its social, political, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them; this includes the programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the organization.
- **Problem Solving** - Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations.
- **Reasoning** - Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or draws accurate conclusions.

- **Team Building** - Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with customer groups; fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, trust. Develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, rewarding and guiding employees.
- **Writing** - Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material, that is appropriate for the intended audience.

Project Management Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities/Competencies

- **Business Process Reengineering** - Knowledge of methods, metrics, tools, and techniques of Business Process Reengineering.
- **Capital Planning and Investment Assessment** - Knowledge of the principles and methods of capital investment analysis or business case analysis, including return on investment analysis.
- **Contracting/Procurement** - Knowledge of various types of contracts, techniques for contracting or procurement, and contract negotiation and administration.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis** - Knowledge of the principles and methods of cost-benefit analysis, including the time value of money, present value concepts, and quantifying tangible and intangible benefits.
- **Financial Management** - Prepares, justifies, and/or administers the budget for program areas; plans, administers, and monitors expenditures to ensure cost-effective support of programs and policies; assesses financial condition of an organization.
- **Planning and Evaluating** - Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.
- **Project Management** - Knowledge of the principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects and resources, including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and contractor performance.
- **Quality Assurance** - Knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools of quality assurance and quality control used to ensure a product fulfills functional requirements and standards.
- **Requirements Analysis** - Knowledge of the principles and methods to identify, analyze, specify, design, and manage functional and infrastructure

requirements; includes translating functional requirements into technical requirements used for logical design or presenting alternative technologies or approaches.

- **Risk Management** - Knowledge of methods and tools used for risk assessment and mitigation of risk.

Technical Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities/Competencies:

- **Technical Competence** - Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to the job; advises others on technical issues.

Note: Additional technical competencies should be identified based on the specific occupation -- see the IT project manager example below.

IT Project Manager Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities/Competencies

In addition to the knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies required of all project managers, IT project managers also require specific knowledge, skills, and abilities/competencies in applying most of these:

- **Configuration Management** - Knowledge of the principles and methods for planning or managing the implementation, update, or integration of information systems components.
- **Data Management** - Knowledge of the principles, procedures, and tools of data management, such as modeling techniques, data backup, data recovery, data dictionaries, data warehousing, data mining, data disposal, and data standardization processes.
- **Information Management** - Identifies a need for and knows where or how to gather information; organizes and maintains information or information management systems.
- **Information Resources Strategy and Planning** - Knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques of information technology (IT) assessment, planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation, such as IT baseline assessment, interagency functional analysis, contingency planning, and disaster recovery.
- **Information Systems/Network Security** - Knowledge of methods, tools, and procedures, including development of information security plans, to prevent information systems vulnerabilities, and provide or restore security of information systems and network services.

- **Information Technology Architecture** - Knowledge of architectural methodologies used in the design and development of information systems, including the physical structure of a system's internal operations and interactions with other systems.
- **Information Technology Performance Assessment** - Knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools (for example, surveys, system performance measures) to assess the effectiveness and practicality of information technology systems.
- **Infrastructure Design** - Knowledge of the architecture and typology of software, hardware, and networks, including LANS, WANS, and telecommunications systems, their components and associated protocols and standards, and how they operate and integrate with one another and with associated controlling software.
- **Systems Integration** - Knowledge of the principles, methods, and procedures for installing, integrating, and optimizing information systems components.
- **Systems Life Cycle** - Knowledge of systems life cycle management concepts used to plan, develop, implement, operate, and maintain information systems.
- **Technology Awareness** - Knowledge of developments and new applications of information technology (hardware, software, telecommunications), emerging technologies and their applications to business processes, and applications and implementation of information systems to meet organizational requirements.